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ABSTRACT

Consistent with educational reform efforts and the premise of teacher involvement, a collaborative state-wide effort was initiated by the New Hampshire State Department of Education to provide opportunities for skilled, experienced teachers to mentor new teachers during a 1-year induction period. This paper details the Mascoma Valley Regional School District's site-based management initiative and addresses several issues surrounding New Hampshire's teacher induction project: (1) gaining the support of various stakeholder groups within the educational community; (2) selection and training of mentors; (3) cost of implementation; (4) mentor compensation, time, and program evaluation; and (5) site-based management and collaborative action research projects. Mentors are expected to: complete a seminar in peer supervision; observe and meet with inductees; meet with a support team comprised of all mentors and the superintendent; work with the staff development committee to arrange professional activities for inductees; and assist the inductee in all necessary areas. Copies of The New Hampshire Teacher Project Selection Criteria for Proposal Funding and an outline of the Mascoma Mentor Education Course are appended. (Contains 16 references.) (LL)

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THE NEW HAMPSHIRE MENTOR PROJECT: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CONCEPT AND APPLICATION

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by

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Introduction

"Mentoring has a long history of success, beginning with Odysseus' decision to entrust the education and development of his son to a wise and learned man named Mentor some 3,500 years ago, and continuing to its present application..."(Gray and Gray, 1985). While the concept of mentoring where an experienced teacher works closely with a new teacher has intrigued educators for some time, it is only recently that formal application of this concept has emerged. (Dubea,1990; Glickman,1990; Hall,1982; Helger and Dudley, 1986; Huberman, 1989,Fall; Huling-Austin, 1990; Levin, 1989; Schlechty and Vance, 1983; Sprinthall and Theis-Sprinthall, 1987; Theis-Sprinthall, 1984,1986). Several states, for example, Maine and Connecticut, mandate a mentoring component into their required certification process for new teachers. Some states, like North Carolina and California, have adopted an assistance model for teacher induction. Others like Ohio and Connecticut use an assessment model, whereby the mentoring relationship has an impact on the continued employment of the new teacher. While a number of programs are run from the state level, New Hampshire has encouraged local school districts to employ site-based management in forming teacher induction models. Many authors have lauded the conceptual promise of mentoring, and examples of success in the development of mentor programs may be found in the literature (Maryland Department of Education 1987; Hegler and Dudley, 1986; Huling-Austin, 1989; Odell, 1987). However, various factors have delayed the national adoption of mentoring in public schools. This paper will detail how several of those factors were addressed in New Hampshire, particularly those found coincidentally at both the state and local levels. Specifically, this paper will address the following issues surrounding New Hampshire's Teacher Induction Project: gaining the support of various stakeholder groups within the educational community, selection and training of mentors, cost of implementation, mentor compensation, time, and program evaluation.

State Perspective - Kathy Dunne

Restructuring schools has become a primary focus and challenge of educators in the 1990's. Site-based management and collaborative action research projects are topics associated with the restructure reform. Additionally, the implication exists that the expectation of teacher involvement must be that much greater.

Consistent with the premise of teacher involvement, a collaborative state-wide effort was initiated by the New Hampshire Department of Education to provide opportunities for skilled, experienced teachers to mentor new teachers during a one year induction period. In the spring of 1989 the New Hampshire State Department of Education made an initial commitment to the development of teacher induction programs in New Hampshire schools. This initiative was designed to follow planning, implementation, and evaluation phases over the ensuing 3 to 5 years. The New Hampshire Teacher Induction Task Force was formed during the first year representing teachers (including state level executives of both the NEA and AFT), superintendents, principals, public and private higher education, the New Hampshire School Improvement Program, The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement in the Northeast and the Islands, and the New Hampshire State Department of Education. Some of the individuals who served on this task force were chosen for their expertise in areas such as adult development, strategic planning, and the change process. In the majority of cases, however, the leadership of each of these special interest groups was asked to nominate an individual to represent that group. During a one year commitment this group was charged with addressing the philosophical underpinnings of the project, researching existing programs, designing and planning a 3 to 5 year process of implementing teacher induction in New Hampshire, outlining a method of assessment, and identifying conditions necessary for success and continuance of the program. As an outgrowth of the thinking of the task force, a request for proposals was sent to public and private schools to establish pilot projects for teacher induction models. Criteria for selection required that the project: 1) be based upon adult development theory, 2) provide an experienced, skillful teacher to serve as a mentor for a new teacher for a one year period, and 3) be an assistance rather than an assessment model.

Fourteen proposals were submitted. After rating each on 12 criteria using a Leikert type scale (See Appendix A), a sub-committee of the task force selected proposals from four districts: Deerfield, Mascoma, Rochester, and Timberlane. The New Hampshire Department of Education funded these four projects for a one year period for up to $5,000. Because of the unique context of each pilot site, each project offered a different and distinct teacher induction model from which empirical data could be collected.

It is particularly noteworthy that the task force extended their initial commitment from 4 meetings over 12 months to 9 meetings over 18 months. One of those meetings was a two day retreat during the summer of 1990. Additionally representatives from this group visited each pilot site in teams of two or three to ask new mentors what they needed to learn. Feedback from those visits shaped the design and content of the two follow-up sessions. Throughout the project, each project director communicated frequently with the state consultant. These discussions were vital in establishing collegial relationships, but, most significantly, nurtured reflective habits which contributed in a positive way to the dynamic nature of the work. There was a constant process of reflection and revision.

At year's end, project participants, project directors, and task force members responded to a questionnaire asking them for their perceptions of the following: their roles, their experiences in the project (both locally and during state level seminars), the impact of the overall project and/or their specific project, and the support from the state level.

The New Hampshire Mentor Teacher Project engendered a positive response to a positive initiative. The collaborative nature of this action research project has many implications for future educational initiative in New Hampshire. The real impact of this project comes alive by taking a look within a district.

Local Perspective - John Carr

> "Teaching often lacks a sense of ownership among the teachers working together that the school is theirs, and that its future and their reputation are indistinguishable" (Sizer, 1984).

Mascoma is a rural district comprised of five towns in western New Hampshire. There are four schools with a total student enrollment of 1650. Although Mascoma is located near Hanover, the site of Dartmouth College, it is one of the poorer school districts in the state. Three years ago Mascoma separated from a larger configuration of districts to become its own educational entity. As the new superintendent, I believed in professional empowerment. To facilitate that process, the staff and I developed a bi-modal decision-making model consisting of the traditional hierarchy coupled with a participative configuration of three parts: the Staff Development Committee, the Curriculum Coordinators' Committee, and the Administrative Team. Both the Staff Development and Curriculum Coordinators Committees are comprised of a membership majority of teachers, and decisions are made by majority vote regardless of role.

During the late spring of 1990, the Staff Development Committee and Curriculum Coordinators voted unanimously to apply for the teacher induction grant advertised by the State Department of Education. Chuck Stone, chair of the Staff Development Committee, and I wrote the application. Before the end of school, we asked for volunteers to serve as mentors should the grant be forthcoming. Approximately forty percent of the staff volunteered. When our proposal was approved during the summer of 1990, Chuck and I were charged with determining who would be the teacher inductees, and who would be their mentors. We had enough money in the grant to fund five mentors. After deciding that our definition of teacher inductees would be anyone new to the district, we researched characteristics of successful mentor and peer coaching programs (Gray and Gray, 1985), and noted what had worked in the Maine certification model for new teachers (Carr and Carr, 1986).

One paramount consideration reflected our value system, and was to be the essence of the entire effort: **that mentors first be persons of good will, who approached work and life positively.**

Additionally, the following criteria were chosen:

1. All would be continuing contract (tenured) teachers who were recognized as competent professionals.

2. All would not be serving in formal supervisory positions, such as department heads. Rationale: While many department heads would make good mentors, they were also responsible for supervising and evaluating the teaching performance of persons within their departments. We thought it appropriate during the pilot process to make mentoring distinct from evaluation for the purpose of continued employment.

3. All would be selected from the pool of volunteers. Rationale: We believed mentoring was too important to assign to draftees.

4. All would be persons who had demonstrated the willingness and ability to stretch themselves beyond the classroom, by serving on district committees, or by other activities. Rationale: We wanted mentors to be persons who had already demonstrated the ability to work well cooperatively with other adults in unstructured, unsupervised situations.

5. All would meet certain logistical situations such as working in the same school or department. Rationale: We thought that a music teacher would be better served by another music teacher in most instances. We also considered geographical proximity of mentor and new teacher to be important.

In early August, hiring was completed for the 1990/91 school year. Chuck and I met to determine the five volunteers who would best meet the established criteria for mentors. We sent individual letters asking them to serve as mentors for one year and identifying the responsibilities and time commitments that would be expected of them. All five responded affirmatively. Mentors were awarded $500 stipends from the grant.

Training

The first state-wide training session was scheduled for August 28th. Chuck and I met with the five novice mentors prior to then to discuss the mentor program in

concept, ask them to help define their perceived needs as new mentors, and brainstorm with them what specific activities could be done by mentors to help facilitate the transition of new teachers into the district.

Time was a problem. While the five persons chosen were competent professionals, none had ever worked in a mentoring format. Together we decided what activities could be conducted quickly to provide them with entry level skills. Our discussions resulted in the seminar syllabus (Appendix B).

Subsequently, seven sessions, from one to two hours in length, were conducted after school on Wednesdays during the months of September and October. Among the topics: adult learning and development, personality profiles as determined by the Myers-Briggs indicator, and meeting the needs of persons new to the district. A clinical supervision component included both a generic model, and observation and conferencing techniques found in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Kits, "Another Set of Eyes: Techniques for Classroom Observation" (Acheson and D'Arcangelo, 1987), and "Conferencing Skills" (Costa and Garmston, 1987). Specifically, mentors were taught the following observation techniques: Verbal Flow, Selective Verbatim, At Task, Class Traffic, and Global Scan. Additionally, they learned questioning and conferencing methods.

Expectations of Mentors

Mentors were expected to accomplish the following:

1. Successfully complete a seminar in peer supervision conducted by the superintendent of schools. The seminar focused on such issues as adult development, effective teaching practices, clinical supervision techniques, active listening skills, situational leadership, etc.

2. Observe and meet formally with the teacher inductee a minimum of the equivalent of one period per week for the first month of school, one period every other week through the end of

November, then monthly for the rest of the year. Keep a log of these meetings.

3. Meet with a support team comprised of all mentors and the superintendent at least once per month, more frequently if needed.

4. Work with the Staff Development Committee to arrange appropriate professional activities for the inductee.

5. Assist the inductee in all necessary areas.

The mentors met with me as a group once a month for the 1990-91 school year. During those sessions we discussed problems and successes, and such delicate issues as the responsibility of the mentor teacher if her teacher inductee is having real difficulty. We also met at the various day long sessions sponsored by the State Department of Education. These sessions allowed us to reflect on what we had been doing, and to plan for the future.

At the end of the year, I met with the teacher inductees. All expressed gratitude for the opportunity to have had mentors. They suggested that I train them in observation and questioning techniques in order that they might have a professional peer observation relationship with the person who had been their mentor. In June, I invited all participants to my home for a celebration of their efforts.

Summary

The Mascoma Mentor Project is on-going. In the spring of 1991, I sent out another request for volunteer mentors. Once again, respondents outnumbered new teachers. Training began in the the spring for all respondents, but funding allowed only five to serve as mentors for the fall of 1991. It is my hope that ultimately all persons in the district will be able to work with peers as trained collegial observers who will provide support and challenge to each other. The children of the district deserve no less.

APPENDIX A

NEW HAMPSHIRE MENTOR TEACHER PROJECT
SELECTION CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL FUNDING

June 1990

All proposals were reviewed and rated on the degree to which they me the following standards. The selection criteria were rated for each proposals on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 the lowest rating and 5 as the highest rating.

1.	The overall plan for the proposed project was clear logical, and relevant to the purpose as stated in the RFP.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	Those who will implement the proposed project have also been, or will be, involved in planning and evaluating the program.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	There is clear evidence of administrator involvement in this project from the outset.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	There will be an experienced, skillful teacher who will mentor a new teacher for a period of one year.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	There will be a commitment to attend mentor training prior to the beginning of the project and additional follow-up training.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	The teacher induction project will be based upon adult development theory.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	The project will be a support system/program for new teachers and not tied into the summative evaluation process.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	The stated objectives and anticipated outcomes are clear, explicit, and appropriate to the purpose.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	The project activities are clearly related to the objectives and show that: (a) they promote conditions that will lead to the anticipated outcomes: and (b) can be accomplished within the stated time.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	The management plan gives evidence of good administrative practice including systematic means of monitoring the progress of the project. For training programs, criteria and procedures for selecting participants should be included.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	The evaluation plan is clearly related to the assessment of the anticipated outcomes and the assessment of the effectiveness of the project. (Project directors will be required to submit a short self-evaluation form.)	1 2 3 4 5
12.	The qualification and responsibilities of any instructors, workshop leaders, or consultants are appropriate for the proposed project.	1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B

MASCOMA MENTOR EDUCATION COURSE
John Carr

Goals: If this course is successful, participants will be able to use supportive supervisory techniques. Specifically, participants should have entry level skills to do the following:

1. Recognize and develop appropriate conferencing skills.
2. Use at least two information gathering techniques during observations of teachers.
3. Explain and conduct the steps of the clinical supervision process.
4. Explain the differences in human character and temperament types as they influence communication.

Activity 1:
A. Myers-Briggs personality profiles
B. Active listening

To do for session 2. Read
1. The Clinical Supervision outline in front of workbook.
2."The Clinical Supervision Model: Supervision in Historic Perspective." Sister Dorothea Foley. Pgs. 79-82 in conferencing section of workbook.
3."The Goals of Instructional Supervision." Arthur Costa. Pgs. 86-90 in conferencing section of workbook.

Activity 2:
A. The Clinical supervision process: overview and rationale

To do for session 3.
1. Prepare 10 statements of "Good Teaching".
2. Read selections on Peer Coaching in Supervision section of workbook.

Activity 3
The Clinical supervision process: observation
A. Tape-Another Set of Eyes-Observation Techniques
B. Practice methods

To do for session 4:
1. Practice one observation technique. Be prepared to share your experience with others.
2. Read: "The Half-full Glass: A Review of Research on Teaching." David Berliner.

Activity 4
The Clinical supervision process
A. Observation techniques (Cont.)
B. Conferencing Skills
    1. Tape-Another Set of Eyes-Conferencing Skills.
    2. Practice conferencing techniques.

To do for session 5:
1. Practice conferencing strategies; particularly questioning techniques.
2. Review entire clinical supervision process to see how all the parts come together.

Activity 5
The Clinical Supervision process
A. Observation and conferencing practicum.

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